

REMARKS

Claims 1 - 25 were pending in the present application for patent as of the Office Action of August 20, 2003. Claims 1 - 6 were previously withdrawn from consideration as a result of a restriction requirement. In the Office Action of August 20, 2003, the Examiner stated the restriction requirement was made final, rejected claims 1, 15 - 19, 21 - 23 under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Number 6,008,536, Mertol, and objected to claims 2 - 14, 20, and 24 - 25 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In the Office Action of August 20, 2003, the Examiner stated that the restriction requirement was made final. However, in the same Office Action, the Examiner rejected unelected claim 1 under 35 USC 102(b) and indicated that unelected claims 2 - 6 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Because the Examiner has examined the unelected claims 1 - 6, Applicants assume that the Examiner has reconsidered and removed the restriction requirement and Applicants have prepared this response and amendment with that assumption in mind.

Claims 1, 15 - 19, 21 - 23 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Mertol. In accordance with the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter, Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the subject matter of claim 2, amended claim 7 to include the subject matter of claim 14, and amended claim 19 to include the subject matter of claim 20. Claims 2, 14, and 20 have been canceled. Applicants believe that claims 1, 7, and 19, as amended, are allowable over Mertol.

Likewise, the applicants believe that the comments above regarding the rejection of claims 1, 7, and 19 also applies to the rejection of claims 3 - 6, 8 - 13, 15 - 18 and 21 - 25, and that claims 3 - 6, 8 - 13, 15 - 18 and 21 - 25 are allowable over Mertol.

No amendment made was related to the statutory requirements of patentability unless expressly stated herein. No amendment made was for the purpose of narrowing the scope of any claim, unless Applicant has argued herein that such amendment was made to distinguish over a particular reference or combination of references.

Believing to have responded to each and every rejection contained in the Office Action mailed August 20, 2003, Applicants respectfully request the reconsideration and allowance of claims 1, 3 - 13, 15 - 19, and 22 - 25; thereby placing the application in condition for allowance.

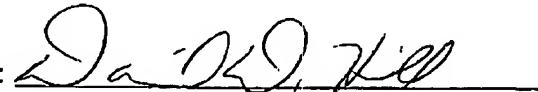
Respectfully submitted,

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